

the skull of the dog i am very  
proud of. it is my prize possession.

i don't ask it any questions,  
and it doesn't ask me any.  
i'll keep it with me as i grow old.

it will keep me company.

i admire the teeth

it has left.

— Ronald Baatz

Mt. Tremper NY

### SNOWBALL

i drive home from work  
mid february  
ten thousand essays graded  
in ten years of teaching  
thirty or forty thousand to go  
if i'm lucky  
a lean gray haired man stops his walk  
beside the retaining wall  
beneath the luxury houses  
behind the wintering driving range  
where the assistant superintendent lives  
with her pink cadillac  
to scoop a snowball  
i speed off  
maybe he wants  
to throw it at my chevvie  
which is as old as my dog  
who is older than my mother  
or will he wait for a truck  
with an open window  
we used to snowbomb busses  
when we were new york kids  
maybe a cop car  
sending them searching  
white streets for juvenile delinquents  
no telling what may happen  
when youth strikes old hearts

### GENGHIS KHAN

ghenghis khan  
we secretly named him  
the anonymous infamous cook  
of yankee kitchen restaurant



charges from the grill waving a butcher knife  
at customers who complain  
while we laugh  
and to the last lick of grease  
eat our plates clean

— Bill Rodriguez

Madison WI

#### A MATTER OF POSTURING

i tell you that there are at least  
a thousand ways to sit in a hard-  
backed chair and you challenge me,  
ask me to demonstrate. but how  
can i make you understand?

it's not possible, seeing that i'm  
only one person and the chair has  
become too familiar for objectivity.

#### CHRISTMAS CARDS

one of my chinese buddies  
complains about how hard it is  
to get christmas cards in richmond  
that are written in chinese.

i tell him that i've never  
been able to find one  
that does the buddha justice,  
though you'd think  
it wouldn't be a problem  
with that flowing smile  
and bowling ball gut of his.

#### CONTINUING ED

she thinks of me as a bum  
because i can't afford  
fashionable clothes  
and though i should  
get a job  
i want to go back to school  
to get another master's degree